1:Evans-Pritchard E-4 (no date) 1948
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ROYAL ELECTION AND INVESTITURE

643 The phases of the investiture of a new king were
114 excellently described by Mr P. Munro[1] of the Sudan Political Service, who was an eye-witness of the investiture of King Fafiti Yor, the twenty-ninth king, in 1918. However, the recent accounts by Mr Howell and Mr Thomson, who were able to make detailed observations on what happened on the death of King Fafiti Yor in 1943 and on the election and investiture of his successor, King Anei, in 1944 and again (Mr Thomson) on the death of King Anei and on the election and investiture of King Dak Fadiet in 1945, are descriptively fuller and analytically more illuminating and are therefore followed in the present summary.

643 On the death of a king his corpse is walled for
766 some months in a hut and his bones are then buried in his natal hamlet, and not in the royal capital. The remains are disposed of, and the mortuary
[767] ceremonies conducted, by royal clients, *ororo*, and
[614] members of the royal clan (the head of which is not the ruling king but the chief of Fadiang settlement).

[1] P. Munro, 'Installation of the Ret of the Chol (King of the Shilluks)', *S.N. and R.* (1918).

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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classes of people, animals, and even things, in which Nyakang may be immanent or with which he is associated.

The chief incarnations and manifestations of Nyakang are as follows:—

1. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are in fact cenotaphs, for though spoken of as his tombs it is well known that he is not buried in any of them.

2. Each Shilluk king incarnates the spirit of Nyakang.

3. This is equally true of certain animals, and may possibly apply to all the members of particular species, as it certainly does to individual members.

4. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as being present, at any rate at certain times, in his wooden effigy kept at Akurwa.

There are ten cenotaph "tombs" of Nyakang (*kwogo Nyakang*) in the Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenikang. Each shrine consists of a group of two or more huts—of the same circular form but rather larger than dwelling huts—together with a small more or less circular enclosure, called *kadi*, neatly fenced with millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched, and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which there projects the blade of a spear, while the surrounding fence is kept in notably good repair. These huts, with the enclosed area, are sacred, for, with the exception of the priests of Nyakang and the old people concerned in keeping them clean, no one may enter the enclosure or even approach it without due cause. In 1910 the Akurwa shrine consisted of two huts, that at Fenikang of five, and these shrines, designed on the plan of a Shilluk homestead (with, however, the addition of the *kadi*), are so built because they are regarded as the homes of Nyakang.

The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang are known as *bareth* (lit. "king's wife"). This term includes certain old men, who appear to have an hereditary connection with the shrine (but on this matter we are unable to be precise), ex-wives of kings, who having borne a reasonable number of children[1] or attained the menopause are sent to take charge of shrines, and men and women of advanced years who are liable to more or less epileptiform attacks, held to indicate possession by Nyakang or a dead king. The *bareth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices,

[1] Hofmayr states that the royal wives do not commonly bear more than three children; after this they are sent to a shrine and become *bareth* (*op. cit.*, 149).

2:Seligman & Seligman E-S (1909-1910) 1932
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793 and officiate in the ceremonies, but it is perhaps true to say that only
767 the bearers for minor sacrifices (recovery from illnesses, etc.) are
killed by them. Hofmayr states that the distinctive mark of the
[292 *hawak* is a necklace of disc beads of ostrich egg-shell, but that they also
301] wear anklets of glass beads, white and green. The *hawak* eat the flesh
of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine;
they are responsible too for the disposal of the bones of the sacrifice,
which they cast into the river.

778 The contents of the *kango* vary, but they always include certain
346 sacred spears, called *alodo*, representing those used by Nyakang and
his companions.

In 1910 we were told that one of the five huts of the Fenikang shrine was in a special sense the house of Nyakang, which he was thought to inhabit. It was distinguished by a number of very rough [532] paintings on its outer wall, some of which could be recognised as representing animals, but we could not learn that the paintings had any special significance. Before the door of the hut were a number [114 of horns of the cattle slain in sacrifice (in 1911 wrongly described as 227] elephant tusks), their thread ends thrust into the ground; within there were said to be skins on the floor, as if for Nyakang to rest upon. Some of the "spears of Nyakang" (*alodo*) are kept here, and there is in this shrine an extremely sacred stool, which may be kept in this hut or may be preserved with some of the sacred spears and a number of elephant tusks in one of the other huts of the shrine, used by the guardians and for storing the millet brought as offerings when the crop is cut. In 1911 we were struck afresh with the resemblance of the shrine to a homestead, with exceptionally large huts; it had been rebuilt since 1910, when we first visited Fenikang, and there were now no horns in front of any hut. At this 783 time (1911) the shrine had been entrusted by the king to the care 778 of a most intelligent elderly Dinka woman, by name Aker—widow of the kings Kur and Fadiet—who was the chief priestess of the shrine. She had three huts and a cattle byre near the shrine; in one hut she [568] kept her beer, and here millet was ground, the two others were for her slaves, who as well as her cattle were provided by the king. We are not certain whether she ever slept in the shrine. According [644 to Shilluk custom Aker had left Kodok during her two pregnancies, 403] but on neither occasion had she been sent to Fenikang; it is, indeed, improbable that a royal wife would be sent to a village containing a shrine, as it might be difficult to accommodate her cattle and those of the shrine attendants as well as the village beasts.

22: Howell E-5 (1951) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

766 Arrangements were made immediately to transport his body to Fashoda, where he should have died, and a steamer left early the next morning. From Fashoda he was carried to Dabwor, a small village nearby which had been expressly made for this purpose and the untraditional manner of his passing does not seem to have caused much comment among the Shilluk themselves. The body was seen by Mr. J. L. Baker, District Commissioner of the Shilluk, on the morning of the 10th and he describes it as being shrouded in white cloth and fanned by his sisters with white goose feathers. There was, in fact, some delay in the preparation of the body, since his death had occurred away from the capital, but after some special ivory bangles had been fetched from Famadh, he was placed according to custom inside a hut in the village of Dabwor. The body was laid on a specially constructed bier (*yaw*)[1] a rectangular construction lined on the outside with fish-spears and covered with a white cloth. The hut was then sealed up and large numbers of Shilluk, mainly from nearby settlements, arrived to pay their homage in the traditional manner. The obsequies were completed by the 12th May, and thereafter the electoral college met to elect the new *reth*, Kur *wad* Fadil.

643 644 428 766 It is apparently the *reth*-elect who decides when the reburial and mourning ceremonies (*nworo*) are to take place in close consultation with the kinsmen of the late *reth*, for they are materially concerned, and also with the *nworo*[2] who are largely responsible for the funeral arrangements. In fact there was some argument between the *reth*-elect and the immediate family of the late *reth*. The former insisted that all disputes over the inheritance of the royal cattle should be settled before the final mourning ceremonies should take place. During *reth* Dak's illness in hospital, his brother Col and his eldest son Adiong, had taken wealthy measures to hide some of the cattle which, by royal right, should pass to his successor and not to his personal heirs. 643 766 The decision was made in November and leads me to believe that the prevailing consideration is that the final mourning ceremonies should always be completed by the next harvest, since the installation of the new *reth* should take place shortly after the crops have been gathered.[3]

The period between death and final burial therefore varies according to the time of year in which death takes place.

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[1] *yaw*: Used only for members of the royal clan and for chiefs.

[2] The *nworo*, originally descended from *reth* Ocolo and separated from the royal house. They have special functions to perform at the burial ceremonies and installation of a *reth*. See Howell and Thomson, idem, p. 6, and Pumphrey, *The Shilluk Tribe*, pp. 12-14.

[3] On this subject see Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 123, *et seq.*, and Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

A[Loc. with Fashoda - Annex 5]

remains of the *reth* had been buried, the *kwe Nyikir* took the field in front of four upturned drums. These drums were either those of the village of Debowor or had been borrowed from nearby villages. The anti-clockwise procession of the *kwe Nyikir* then began, each of them hopping over a gourd (*kwey*) which was produced as a substitute for a sheep which is normally used on these occasions. The drummers, led by *jago* Bol, their chief, then took up their position round the drums and began to beat them. At Debowor there was no ritual lighting of fire (*pir*) by fire sticks as at Kajo and which had preceded all ceremonies relating to the election of the *reth* and the burial of the old one; possibly the spirit of the late *reth* had left the place. As the drums began to beat, the chiefs of Gere—with the exception of the chief of Mureyo who was in charge of the arrangements for the installation then being made at the shrine at Akurwa and had not come—began to dance with the shuffling gait of a religious dance (*jiokɔ* as opposed to social dances, *coŋ ruŋɔ*) and finally all went up to the hut in which the late *reth*'s body had lain for so many months and sang songs to Nyikang outside it just as the chiefs of Louk had done outside the burial hut at Kajo and an ox (*nyiɔd*) was speared as a sacrifice. The purport of this song was "we have asked for cows but instead you have beaten us; please restore to us our cows this time." This presumably means that they were asking for better treatment under the new *reth*, for Dak *wad* Fadiet, "the scourge of Nyikango," had been a most unpopular figure outside his own area.

With this, the important ceremonies were over and the march of the clans followed. The sections which participated were Both, Bol, Nyiŋgwe, Pakur, Agudo, Bio, Thwolang, Yany, Lol, Fashodo, Nyigir, Gulbany, Fallening, and Lemo. This took two days. Kodok and Golo did not come, possibly because they were too much in favour of the house of Fidki and had never supported Dak. Thus the pattern of this ceremony in Gere followed closely that which had been performed in Louk at Kajo, only there was no body to bury. The predatory *orwo* had little to do except the unpleasant one of taking up the bier and skins on which the *reth*'s remains had previously lain and rotted and burying them inside the hut and of guarding the sacred mound outside the hut. I had thought that this hut, where the body of the late *reth* had been immured, would be broken down when the remains had been brought out to carry to Kajo, but this was not so, and the *orwo* had the ghoulish task of breaking down the door and collecting the remains into a presentable bundle while the house was still standing. The hut was still in good condition and will not be broken down until later, when the *kwegwok* Dak will level the hut to ground, though they will continue to occupy the rest of the village as formerly."

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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Whatever the cause of death, burial follows at once except in the case of a king, when there is a short lying in state. If the deceased is a Nyireth or a chief, he is buried under the floor of his principal hut. A bull is killed, the meat of which is eaten by the grave-diggers, whilst the skin is cut into strips and woven across a quickly fashioned wooden, four-legged frame to make a bed or a bier. The body is washed and the head shaved. Arms, neck and waist are adorned with beads and a leopard skin fastened round the loins. The corpse is then rolled in a new white cloth and around this is bound a cow skin. It is then placed on the bed with a hen under the head. Meanwhile the work of digging the grave has been going on apace. This is a very difficult task, particularly in the dry season when the ground is as hard as concrete. The pit made is a very large one, since it has to accommodate the complete bier. It is taken down to a depth of six or seven feet and then a large cavity is cut in the side, large enough to contain the bed. The body resting on the bier is then lowered into the grave and fitted into the cavity. As this is being done the wailing of the women fills the air and the men salute the dead prince or chief, clashing their spears on their shields and singing songs in his praise. The principal wife takes two handfuls of sweepings from the floor and, standing with her back to the grave, throws them over her shoulders into the grave. Then she casts in two handfuls of mud, again standing with her back to the grave but with her hands by her sides, so that she throws the mud behind her. After the grave is filled in, all the mourners wash themselves in the river. They wear ropes round their necks as a sign of mourning, shave their heads and remove all beads and ornaments, and during the period of mourning should abstain from dancing. Four days after the burial the mourners gather again for the completion of the grave. Beer has been prepared and some if it is poured on the grave; the mound is then plastered over with mud and neatly smoothed and finished off. A short funeral dance follows after which all the mourners partake of the remainder of the beer.